

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SAM-01

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4598

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGUI 0190

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CT, US

SUBJECT: TIME ARTICLE RE BOKASSA

REF BANGUI 0184

1. AT FAREWELL CEREMONY FOR SENGHOR TODAY I MANAGED TO TALK WITH FONMIN POTOLOT RE SUBJECT ARTICLE. I EXPLAINED MATTER ALONG LINES NOTED PARA 2 REFTEL, NOTING I WISHED IT BROUGHT TO BOKASSA'S ATTENTION AND EXPRESSING MY PERSONAL DISAPPOINTMENT AT WAY ARTICLE WAS WRITTEN.

2. POTOLOT SEEMED GRATEFUL I HAD INFORMED HIM OF ARTICLE, WHICH HE HAD NOT YET HEARD OF (ALTHOUGH SOME OF MY DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES ALREADY HAD). HE SAID HE WOULD INFORM PRESIDENT BOKASSA AND INDICATED LATTER'S REACTION COULD PROBABLY BE "MANAGED" IF DEPT PUBLICLY DISASSOCIATED ITSELF FROM ARTICLE AND EXPRESSED BALANCED VIEW OF CAR SITUATION. I SAID I WOULD INQUIRE FROM WASHINGTON ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF THIS AND WOULD LET HIM KNOW.

3. COMMENT: POTOLOT'S REACTION REINFORCES OUR VIEW THAT REPLY SUGGESTED REFTEL OR OTHER APPROPRIATE USG STATEMENT IS ESSENTIAL TO LIMIT DAMAGE US-CAR RELATIONS WHICH ARTICLE COULD CAUSE. WOULD APPRECIATE EARLIEST CONSIDERATION AND REPLY.

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